Swami Vivekananda

A Sketch

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PREFACE.

IN the wonderful disposition of Providence, it has been designed that truths revealed, perhaps for the first time, to the sages of our country, and treasured up by them in a monumental form, should cross oceans and mountains and spread among nations utterly foreign to us both in their past and their present lives. The revolution created by Kant in the western philosophy, the Upanishad-intoxication of Schopenhaur, the Sacred Books of the East of Prof. Max Muller, the activities of the Theosophical Society, and last but not least, the timely appearance on the platform of the World's Fair held at Chicago in 1893 of the illustrious *Sri Swami Vivekananda*, all testify to this truth. Science itself has become a willing tool in the hands of our philosophy. The word Vedanta is as familiar on the shores of the Michigan and in the streets of Paris and Berlin, as on the heights of the Himalayas or in the banks of the Cauvery and the Ganges.

Christian missionaries tried to "save our souls" and in their eagerness to vilify our philosophy and our religion, opened a magic chest, the very smell of whose contents made them faint. Oriental scholars, in trying

to discover the wisdom of the East, invoked a deity, too powerful for them to appease. The white man and his fair lady strayed into the Indian woods and came across the Hindu sage, sitting under the tree in meditation. The hoary banyan, the cool shade, the refreshing stream, the sweet songs of birds, and more than all, the hoarier, cooler, more refreshing and sweeter ambrosia falling from the lips of the Hindu sage, enchanted them. The discovery was published; and a train of pilgrims, followed by all the paraphernalia of a festive procession, reached the Indian Shores, and behold, Religion raises its head in our motherland once more.

Fifty years ago, that great teacher of humanity, known to the world as Swami Vivekananda, was ushered into existence. Having lived an unknown life, and trying to live unknown, Swamiji's name was made public in 1893, when he stood on the platform of the Parliment of Religions, as the accredited representative of the RELIGIONS of India.

Before our eyes, he stood as the prophet of Modern India, not of the India strutting about in the finery of the alien, ephemeral, materialistic, western civilisation, but of the very soul of her who stands in Her glory as the Mother of Religions. Every one is proud of him today for raising his motherland high in the

estimation of the western world. And whoever has come in contact with his blessed personality or with his teachings of our sublime philosophy, owes a debt of gratitude to him which nothing can repay. His love to the world and to humanity were such as we can give no idea of the vastness thereof. But, he left us as abruptly and as suddenly as he appeared before us,— though he has left behind an undying fame— and the loss to India is truly irreparable.

All his life long, Swamiji lived the practical side of his teaching, he lived what he preached; for that was the lesson he had learnt at the feet of his *Master*. He saw the hollowness of the materialment of the west and had his life shaped by the Divine Mother. Every Indian is proud of him today just as he desired them to be proud of their own heritage.

To serve in the spreading of Swamiji's message and religion, the grand truths of the Vedanta, is the author's modest ambition. His attempt is only a humble one and here he presents the Ideal as he has learnt and understood it. To work alone he has the right, and in the words of the *Song Celestial*, he begs to resign the fruit to Him who guides all and Himself wants no guide.

This little biography of Sri Swamiji is sent out to commemorate his Semi-centenary birthday. It contains

but the short notes of a lecture delivered on his 48th birthday anniversary celebrated at Trichinopoly (in the Saraswathi Hall of the National High School, with M. R. Ry. T. V. Swaminatha Aiyar, avl., B. A., L. T., pleader, Trichinopoly, in the chair) on 13—2—1910. Being personally unacquainted with Swamiji, the author knows very little of him; but what little he knows today, he owes to Swamiji's inspiring and inspired teachings. Swamiji's writings are to him a treasury of spiritual wisdom, and sitting under his feet, even as he is painted there in the portrait, he draws from that fountain, love and devotion.

And now let this prayer go forth in humble reverence:

'यस्य वीर्येण कृतिनो वयं च भुवनानि च ।
सर्वस्वतन्त्रं तं वन्दे रामकृष्णं सदेश्वरम् ॥'

Ever yours in the Lord of the Universe,

TEPPAKULAM,
Trichinopoly,
January 1913.

The AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

Self-respect, self-reliance and self-help are the three elementary virtues that constitute the motive power of the rising of a nation. And what feeds these three virtues is the nation's own self-knowledge. In the degree a nation becomes conscious of her inner nature and its possibilities, she learns to respect herself and place reliance upon her own inner resources; and having the self-respect and self-reliance as her goal, she cannot but develop the spirit of self-help which urges her on into activity. Thus quickened with life by the aforesaid tried virtues she finds the gradual unfoldment of her inner Self. That is, all the sleeping forces and dormant capacties of her soul are wakened up, one by one, and brought to bear upon her onward march of life, till she attains her salvation. The Vedanta philosophy holds that man is potentially Divine,— he hides his infinite possibilities within the thick vesture of unconscious ignorance that he has put on himself: to-day he feels he is bound, he is miserable, he is weak. Because he has hypnotised himself through ages past with the suggestions of limitations, misery and weakness. If he wants to regain his apparently lost divine heritage, he must wind

up his course in the opposite direction to the one he is following now;— he must de-hypnotise himself with the opposite suggestions of freedom, power and bliss; in short, he must acquire the self-knowledge that will take him ultimately to self-realisation and self-fulfilment. Hence it is clear that self-knowledge leads to freedom and self-ignorance to bondage. As it is true with an individual, so also with the nation which is nothing but individual units grouped together.

The present decadence of India is much due to the want of these threefold national virtues of self-reliance, self-respect and self-help. When the sun of Buddha's magnetic influence was slowly sinking in the dusky water of the anomaly of faith and *acharas*, due to the influx of outlandish manners and customs seeking to be infused in the views of the old life of India, through the channels cut out by the missionary zeal of the Buddhists, then a dark pall of doubt and despondency began to shroud her mind, and the consequence was a considerable impairment of the Sanatana Dharma. That is why we find the religious life of India flowing at such a low ebb during the fifth, sixth and seventh century of the Christian Era. In the eighth century came the mighty Sankara to re-institute the old Vaidic Dharma and the proper Hindu *acharas* and he was successful to do so to an immeasureable extent, as

his influence is felt in Hindu life even today. But to suit the requirements of the age and the taste of people, he had to keep in some of the accretions of the Buddhistic age, only colouring them with the tint of the ancient faith. Thus Sankara gave a tremendous impetus to the religious life of India; but his transcendental philosophy could not recover her from the blow she received from Buddhism in the physical plane of existence. Buddha's preaching of non-injury was mis-understood by the people: by non-injury they understood non-resistance even to a wrong done to them. And in pursuance to this belief they sought to become passive, the consequence of which was a total extinction of the Kshatria Dharma in India. Though we find some Kshatria exploits here and there in the subsequent ages, yet that martial spirit, that Kshatra Dharma which had been so predominant in the heart of India, forming the most necessary constituent of her broadly planned social life in the pre-Buddhistic age, disappeared from the land for ever. Sankara revived the spiritually exalted Brahmanya Dharma but he could not bring to life again, the *Kshatra Viryam*, nor did he make any effort for that. Now these Kshatrias were the defenders of the national self-respect and self-reliance: with their extinction, these two virtues also became extinct, and the self-consciousness was left only flickering within the heart of

India like the dull dim light of a lamp, imprisoned in some sooty chimney made of glass. The distant result of this was the unavoidable slavery of India to the foreign rule for the last thousand years and in which state she is lying low still. Though great Acharyas like Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Sri Krishna Chaitanya, great saints like Nanak, Ramdos, Tulsidos and a host of them made their appearance from time to time within the last sixteen centuries to kindle up the spiritual consciousness of India and thereby preserve her life— vitality, in tact, yet none of them evidently made any attempt to revive India's lost self-respect and self- reliance by flairing up the self-consciousness to its fullest lustre. It was given only to this sage whose life forms the theme of the present booklet to re-vivify even the darkest corners of India's mind, dispelling all gloom of doubt and despair and rejuvenating her to be installed again in her former throne of high excellence, with the light that had had its origin in the Vedic culture and now which was reappearing through his guru Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. In fact, studying the life-history of Swami Vivekanandaji, one thought forces itself so strongly upon our mind, in spite of ourselves, that his advent was dispensed by the Divine hand to re-awaken the true nationality of India, once more, in all its ramifications. The life of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was an eternal

self-vindication of the old India against the sceptic irreverence of the age, and the messenger of the Divine Guru carried that benediction to the distant lands in an amazing manner, at times making it even aggressive to the faltering people at home. His wonderful genius, unparallelled versatility, keen power of observation through human life, and above all his high ascetic life steeped in the spirituality of the ancient sages, all combined, made him equal to the task. And no wonder that we find today an effort being made all over the land to enshrine him in the heart of the nation as the prophet of the age.

True it is that Swami Vivekananda was not a mighty general who carried the flag of India over a bloody carnage to hoist it on some foreign soil, nor was he a great political leader who employed his subtle intelligence to push hard the ruling policy of imperialism on other nations and thereby implant India's sovereignty on their hearts, nor was he the keen-witted economist who opened many resources for India to fill her coffers; no, he was nothing of these, yet he was far greater than all these; he was the true *man* of the nation, a true *leader* of the people. India's nationality, India's life-mission lies not in great military conquest, nor in setting afoot mighty political movements, nor in the shining display of mundane

splendour and opulence. Her nationality is in the *realisation* of the unity of life through religion, and her life-mission consists in spiritualizing the world; yet the military activity, political felicity and worldly prosperity have all their respective places in the broad plan of life drawn for her by her ancient sages. To show this Swami Vivekananda came.

To the outside world he has proved in an unmistakeable term the superiorty of India as a land of spirituality. He has shown that the entire civilised nations of the present day owe their allegiance to her for the spiritual light she threw upon them in the past and they would do well even now to sit at her feet and receive their spiritual lessons from her; and by that alone they can be saved from the ruinous effect of the mere materialistic pursuits of life.

To his own country, he came as a great redeemer of his people. He knew the malady of the age and he has prescribed the apt medicine for it too. The root-cause of our national disease is, as I have mentioned in the beginning, the absolute loss of self-respect, self-reliance and the spirit of self-help, which the great Swami used to sum up in one phrase "the loss of *Sraddha.*" To revive the sraddha, he asked us to have recourse to the old Vedantic lore once again, giving up all present-day incrustations of *Desachara* and *Lokachara* which

have no sanction of our old Sastras. And for our easy comprehension of this Vedanta Dharma he set himself to explain it in a most marvellous way traversing the entire field of its expansion. His lectures on the four Yogas (Jnana yoga, Raja yoga, Bhakti yoga, and Karma yoga) are the monumental works on this line.

Another cause of the disease he has pointed is the excess of Tamas that we are carrying in our vein. How he diagnoses the disease— "Do you not see,—taking up this clue the Satva, the country has been slowly and slowly drowned in the ocean of Tamas, or dark ignorance? Where the most dull want to hide their stupidity by covering it with a false desire for the highest knowledge, which is beyond all activities, either physical or mental; where one born and bred in life-long laziness wants to throw the veil of renunciation over his own unfitness for work; where the most diabolical try to make their cruelty appear under the cloak of austerity as a part of religion; where no one has an eye upon his own incapacity, but every one is ready to lay the whole blame on others; where knowledge consists only in getting some books by heart, genius consists in chewing the cud of other's thoughts and the highest glory consists in taking the name of ancestors;— do we require any other proof to show that the country is sinking, day by day, in utter Tamas?" And he prescribes the medicine thereof:

"Therefore, Satva or absolute purity is now far away from us. Those amongst us who are not yet fit, but who hope to be fit to reach to that absolutely pure Paramahamsa state,— for them, the acquirement of Rajas, or intense activity, is what is most beneficial now. Unless a man passes through Rajas, how can he ever attain to that perfect Satvic state? How can one expect Yoga or God-realisation, unless one has previously finished with his thirst for *Bhogam* or enjoyments? How can renunciation come where there is no Vairagyam or dispassion for all the charms of enjoyments?" "We want that (that which the western nations have) energy, that love of independence, that spirit of self-reliance, that immovable fortitude, that dexterity in action, that bond of unity of purpose, that thirst for improvement, checking a little the constant looking back to the past, we want that expansive vision infinitely projected forward and we want,— that intense spirit of activity (Rajas) which will flow through our vein, from head to foot." Here he plainly means to revive that Kshatra Virya, the Rajas of the Kshatrias abated by Satva. Before Swami Vivekananda, we have not heard any Acharya telling us "You will understand now Gita better by playing foot-ball than by anything else"; "We want muscles of iron and nerves of steel" etc. Weak brains and weak nerves are the eternal abode of Tamas. Therefore strong and healthy physique

is absolutely needed for the advancement of India for the present. But in this pursuit of Rajas he asks us not to lose sight of the ideal which is the absolute purity of the Satvic state; nay, we are urged to go even beyond the Ṣatva, to the state of Brahman void of Gunas. In his lectures on Karma Yoga and Practical Vedanta he has shown most splendidly how to fuse the Satvic guna into the Rajas so that the combination of the two would hasten the national self-development through the purification of the national mind. The Rajas controlled and chastened by a high pitch of Satva goes to constitute the *real* manhood; that is the reason why we find the great Swami exhorting us to pray day and night— "O thou Lord of Gouri, oh thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me! Oh thou Mother of strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and— Make me a man!"

His one advice to humanity in general is "know thyself." He was never tired of impressing on the mind of the people, the unfaded glory of the Atman that constitutes our real being: Let the man contemplate on the immortal grandeur of the Self; all his weaknesses, all his feelings of misery and sin will vanish away in no time, and the latent divinity will become manifest from within. Let not man forget that in this

unfoldment of the inner divinity alone lies the goal of man, that is the haven which the ship of life is bound for.

Such was the message in short, of the great sage who was in our midst in this mortal plane only eleven years ago. But the man was even greater than his message; as a saint of exalted piety, as an ascetic of extreme renunciation, as a sage of supreme wisdom, as a scholar of profound learning, as a patriot of all consuming love for his country and her people, as a preacher of the divine devotion to the Self, all these combined have made him stand out as the ideal man for mordern India. The more her sons and daughters drink deep of the fountain of inspiration of which Swami Vivekananda forms a living source, the better will be for her self-development, and I hope the purpose of the present booklet will be amply fulfilled if it could evoke in the mind of its readers, a thirst to know more of this prophet, the acharya of the present age.

In conclusion, I wish to remark that there are a few statements in the main body of the book that are not correct; the author Sriman M. S. Nateson has unknowingly put them in. Though they are of minor consequence, yet I feel it necessary to point out the inaccuracies for the right apprehension of the reader. In page 3, it is

stated "when he was only 12, he studied Herbert Spencer's First Principles etc." It is not true; he took up the study of Spencer's Philosophy when he was reading in the B. A. class, i. e., at 18 or 19 years of age, and he must have written the letter to Herbert Spencer about that time and the letter is not "still preserved in the Belur Math." In page 11, 3rd para, it is said "Vivekananda was chosen as the leader by his co-disciples, who numbered about twenty." This also is not accurate. Though Sri Ramakrishna had many householder disciples, yet he left only fourteen Sanyasin disciples behind him, who were headed by the great Swamin. Next, the author states in the same para "He stayed in the Himalayas for 6 years, practising Yoga and leading the life of an ascetic. Thereon, he went to Tibet to study the principles of Buddhism. He was taken there as a spy, followed by the police, kept in prison and at last set free when his innocence was proved to the Chinese Government. (Be it noted here that the average temperature on the Himalayas is 30 Degrees F° below zero)." All this is not true. The Swami never went to Tibet, though he ascended up to a considerable height of the Himalayas, nor the average temperature of the Himalayas is 30° below zero. The above statements were true of another swami, a co-disciple of Swami Viveka-

nandaji, who went to Tibet and had to undergo all the molestations as described. Besides these few mis-statements other accounts are all pretty correct in this book and I hope they will help the reader to form some idea of the great Patriot-Sage.

Om Santih! Om Santih! Om Santih!

MYLAPORE, Madras.

SHARVANANDA.

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॥ श्रीगुरुभ्यो नमः ॥

Swami Vivekananda.

SALUTATIONS unto Sri Paramahamsa Yatirâja Digvijaya Kolâhala Sarvamatasampratipanna Paramayogîswara Bhagavân Sri Ramakrishna Karakamalasanjâta Rajâdhirâjasêvita SRI VIVEKANANDA SWAMIJI.

The subject of our sketch was born on Monday the 9th January 1862, six minutes before sunrise, and the planets Jupiter and Saturn predicted that the new-born babe would never enter the path of a householder, but would become a king of Sanyasins. As the mother had no male issue for a long time, she went to Benares, where she prayed so fervently to Viresvara Siva, who, being pleased with her devotion, told her in a dream that He Himself was going to be born of her. Accordingly the child was named

Vireswara. The child had a very strong memory even in his early youth, and would repeat every word of anything he heard. Years went on and the baby became a big boy. He was sent to school in his fifth year, and as he grew up, in his 12th year, he began to dislike the conception of Deity with forms, and initiated himself as a Brahmo Samajist.

At this time, he broke down the idols of Rama and Krishna, and when he came in contact with the great Brahmo leader, Keshub Chandra Sen, he became one of Keshub's chief actors and used to lead the choir in Keshub's place of worship. It should be noted here that Narendra (as Vireswara was later on called) was passionately fond of music, and that he took the lead in all Bhajanas and Sankirtan parties connected with the Brahmos.

But after some time, he disliked the Brahmo ways of worship as he was not satisfied with mere verbal prayers. He yearned to see God. He asked every Brahmo leader if he had seen God and nobody could give him a positive answer. At this time, the modern scientific education he had received in school and college imbibed in him a good deal of scorn in religious ideas and he had no firm faith in anything.

But at the same time, he was tormented with a thirst to know the truth of things.

When he was only 12, he studied Herbert Spencer's First Principles and wrote a letter to the Philosopher criticising some of his views, which pleased the latter so much that he wrote to our Swami encouraging him in his philosophical studies. This letter, I am told, is still preserved in the Belur Math.

He looked around and saw shams everywhere. His faith was shaken. Scientific agnosticism, combined with his own intolerance of shams made him renounce all belief in religion. He questioned every one who professed to believe in religion whether he had any realisation in the things he preached. He demanded truth and sincerity before everything else. He did not belong to the class of "Don't-touch-ism" which has so much degraded religion in these days and confined it to the kitchen. He asked many Mahammadans and Christians if any of them had seen God, but was always assailed with the inevitable "No." He travelled to distant places in yearning for truth, in search of a Guru who would teach him the truth.

Such was the mind of a fresh graduate of the Calcutta University who was preparing to become a lawyer in a country which was full of Western Materialism. Missionary propagandism was reaping a rich and glorious harvest. Men of talent and scholars of the very highest order were becoming Christians. In the meanwhile, amidst this all pervading confusion and chaos, a humble Sanyasin, in his own quiet and unobtrusive way, was teaching the higher doctrines of the Sanatana Dharma to those who came to him, leading a life of plain living and high thinking. "Born in the petty village of Kamarpukur in the district of Hughli on the 20th of February 1834, he fixed his place of Sadhana the root of the Panchavati in the Kalivathi at Dakshineswara. There in the eternal longing of a soul that pants for truth and higher spirituality, enshrined within the majesty of his own soul, shutting up the organs of the material senses, after the right oriental fashion, he made self and self alone his study and his contemplation. And he entered his own inner consciousness into his inner self and directed the same towards Brahmagnanam till that was to him an accomplished fact. Then, became manifest that splendid fire, which has set ablaze the whole civilized world." He was a

middle-aged, middle-sized man, of a rather dark complexion, neither thin nor plump, of not very prepossessing features, a plain dhoti wrapped carelessly round his waist, with large eyes which had the shine in them of worldly indifference. Such was SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA: for that was the name of the blessed sage, practising yoga, looking as a swain at the first glance, dressed as a coolie, simple as a child. But before the visitor could throw a second glance at him, his personality and his charm have overtaken the man and he finds himself in the presence of a divinity. A third glance, (even at his portrait), and you see your own thoughts mirrored in his look and you can no longer conceal them. In Sri Ramakrishna, the renunciation of woman and gold, the two great causes that shut the source of divinity in man, was complete unclouded bliss. He was no spurious Sadhu but a real divinity. Like the desert flower, which is "born to blush unseen and waste its sweet fragrance in the desert air," he was in the seclusion of the temple of Kali at Dakshineswara, until Keshub Chandra Sen discovered him and brought him into the light of the day.

This Keshub, possessed of great learning, used to sit humbly as a disciple by the side of the illiterate

Paramahamsa and listen to his sayings. Pratab Chandra Mazumdar writes of him: "My mind is still floating in the luminous atmosphere which that wonderful man diffuses around him whenever and wherever he goes. My mind is not yet disenchanted of the mysterious and indefinable pathos which he pours into it whenever he meets me. What is there in common between him and me? I, a Europeanized, civilized, self-centered, semi-sceptical, so-called educated reasoner, and he, a poor, illiterate, unpolished, half-idolatrous friendless Hindu devotee? Why should I sit long hours to attend to him, I who have listened to Disræli and Fawcett, Stanley and Max Muller, and a whole host of European scholars and divines? I who am an ardent disciple and follower of Christ, a friend and admirer of liberal-minded Christian missionaries and preachers, a devoted adherent and worker of the rationalistic Brahmo Samaj—why should I be spell-bound to hear him? And it is not I only, but dozens like me who do the same. He has been interviewed and examined by many, crowds pour in to visit and talk with him. Some of our clever intellectual fools have found nothing in him; some of the contemptuous Christian missionaries would call him an imposter, or a self-deluded enthusiast. I have

weighed their objections well, and what I write now, I write deliberately."

Many that were given to drinking and debauchery, and many more sceptics, have become virtuous and well-behaved. University honours have prostrated themselves at his feet and become his disciples.

When young Narendra was in despair, he became an agnostic. Just about this time, Keshub Chandra Sen had discovered Sri Ramakrishna, the great Yogi of Dakshineswara, and was imbibing from him those influences which gave birth to his "new dispensation."

An uncle of Narendra was in the habit of spending all his leisure in the presence of this Paramahamsa. His nephew came to know of this and began to scoff at him in the way characteristic of English-educated youths of this country. The uncle was much annoyed at the irreverence of his nephew, and challenged him to go with him to the Paramahamsa and retain his agnostic and irrelevant proclivities. Narendra accepted the challenge and went with the full confidence that he would confound the old illiterate Sadhu with his subtle questions drawn from the philosophers of the west. Sri Ramakrishna was a simple man and used the most simple language ; and

the future Vivekananda thought " Can this man be a great teacher ?" Arguments overwhelmed at the Sadhu by our westernist were refuted and the natural question was: " Sir, have you seen God ?" Great was his joy and astonishment when, with clear and positive assertion, the answer came " Yes ; I have." " Can you show Him to me ?" asked the young boy of 19. "Yes, I can." " How ?" " Because I see Him just as I see you—only in a much intenser light." This impressed Narendra at once. For the first time in his life, he found a man who dared to say he had seen God, and who promised to show Him to him. The very first meeting roused in Sri Ramakrishna the earnest passion that the young agnostic before him would be his successor ; accordingly opportunities were sought for a time when both would be alone. An occasion came and Narendra was directed to go alone on another occasion. Our young graduate agreed and one day came all alone to the saint, and the following conversation took place.

Master (smiling, to Narendra):—What do you say, Narendra ? Worldly men will say all manner of things against the godly. Suppose, my boy, people speak ill of you behind your back ; what would you think of them ?

Narendra :—I would look upon them as a lot of curs barking after me.

Master (laughing):—No, my dear boy, go not you so far as that. (Laughs) Know that God makes His abode in all things animate and inanimate. Everything is an object of our worship, be it man or beast, bird, plant or mineral.

Narendra :—Should we hold our peace, if bad people come to offend us or do actually offend ?

Master :—A person living in society, especially as a householder, should *make a show* of the spirit of resisting evil for purposes of self-defence. At the same time care should be taken to avoid paying back evil for evil.

It was during one of such conversations that the saint infused that divine spirit into his disciple which a few years later astonished the whole world. From that time forward, he became the most beloved disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and the latter loved him with a love which even a mother cannot have towards her only child. No Guru was ever blessed with a more apt disciple.

But yet Narendra did not believe his master's words. He questioned, he argued, and above all, he watched the sage's life to see if he practised what he taught. He kept this up for years before he became fully convinced.

The next six years of Vivekananda's life were spent in incessant company with the Master and it was during this time that Vivekananda's greatness was sown. He could not live for a moment without Sri Guru Maharaj. He became an out-and-out Vedantin and being a bachelor, determined to consecrate his life to the cause of Vedanta. He left his home and fixed Dakshineswara as his place of residence. His mother grew anxious about her child and wished very much that he should marry and lead the life of a householder. She was pleased to note that her son was no more an agnostic, but a devout Vedantin ; but at the same time, like most mothers, she was not willing to go so far as to allow her son to renounce the world. She therefore actually went to Sri Ramakrishna and begged of the sage not to confer Sanyasa upon her son. Narendra's would-be bride was brought before him ; but he was not in the least affected by any temptation. When he was troubled

more and more, he left his home and disappeared for many days.

Thus did Vivekananda spend his early years in enquiry after truth in the company of his blessed Master, who would often quote "A learned ignorance is the end of philosophy and the beginning of religion."

In 1884, the Master fell ill, and in the succeeding year, placed himself for treatment under Dr. Sarkar and other physicians; but on the 16th August 1886, he passed away from the world of mortals, leaving his disciples to misery and doubt. At this time Vivekananda was 24 years of age.

Vivekananda, although a junior, was chosen as the leader by his co-disciples, who numbered about twenty, almost all of whom were graduates. But within a year, he determined to leave his sanyasin friends and go about on a travelling tour. He stayed in the Himalayas for 6 years, practising yoga and leading the life of an ascetic. Thereon, he went to Tibet, to study the principles of Buddhism. He was taken there as a spy, followed by the police, kept in prison and at last set free when his innocence was proved to the Chinese Government. (Be it noted here that the average temperature on the Himalayas

is 30 degrees F° below Zero). Then he travelled to important places in India, walking barefooted, teaching and helping the people. In the snowy Himalayas, in the marshy plains of Bengal, over the burning deserts of Southern India, amidst pestilence and famine, undergoing privations of every kind, he persevered in his loving ministry, bringing hope and comfort to thousands of disconsolate hearts. Through all these troubles and temptations, he emerged unscathed and as pure as he was before taking sanyasa. On occasions, he escaped even the jaws of death through sheer force of his undaunted spirit and through the faith he had in his Master and above all in himself. He believed that he was the AKHANDA-SAT-CHIT-ANANDAM and this was the source which supplied him with everlasting strength. He cared not for his body nor for his dress nor food, but always took what chance offered him. Thirst and hunger, the chief impediments of mortals, did not leave the brave disciple of Ramakrishna unaffected. He was fatigued, he was hungry, he was thirsty, but did not lose courage. He again thought that the AKHANDA-SAT-CHIT-ANANDAM was in him and this thought bore him up. On one occasion, tired for want of food, highly overpowered by fatigue, even without water to

drink, he fell down, unable to rise; but that bold lion, that never-failing spirit, that thought that he was identical with the AKHANDA-SAT-CHIT-ANANDAM, encouraged him and again he rose up and marched on. Such were his toils in the Himalayas. He then visited Sri Pavhari Baba of Ghazipur and learnt from him several important lessons.

On another occasion, Swamiji was travelling in Rajputana in a railway train in company with two Europeans. The latter spoke in English and laughed at the Swami. The train stopped at one of the wayside stations and the Swamiji asked the station-master for water. To their great surprise, the two Europeans learnt that the Sadhu could speak a word or two of English. They continued their merry laugh and the Swamiji, unable to check himself any longer, said "This is not the first time I have seen fools." Thereupon a discussion arose, and the Swami, with his wit, humour and boldness, overpowered them; and they finally began to fight with the Swami. Even in the fight, the white men were disappointed at seeing the undaunted spirit of the Swami and came to know finally who he was and learnt to honour him.

The next place of visit was Khetri whose rajah

became Swamiji's disciple. Junagar was then visited; thence the Swami passed on to Limdi and Palitana, thence to Baroda, where he remained as a guest of the then Prime Minister. From Baroda, the Swami went to Poona (visiting Mahamahopadhyaya Raja Ram Sastri on the way at Bombay) where he put up with Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak and then proceeded to Mahableshwar. Then he went to Belgaum where he remained for a fortnight. After converting an agnostic there, Swamiji left for Trivandrum. Mr. K. Sundararama Aiyer, M.A., the then tutor to His Highness the late first Prince of Travancore, and Mr. Rangachariar, M.A., Professor of Science in the Maharajah's College, met him. The Swami remained with them for some time and then joined the party of Mr. Bhattacharji, Assistant Accountant-General, who happened to be there. Both of them being Bengalis, they travelled together, visited Ramesvaram, and then went to Madras, *via.*, Pondicherry. Within a few days, his intellectual powers came to be known to all and he was introduced to the Madras public through the Triplicane Literary Society. Very soon, students of Dr. Duncan, Mill, Bain, and Spencer, seeing that it was impossible for all of them to approach the Swami with their book-learning on

philosophical lines, fell at his feet. The late Singaravelu Mudaliar, B.A., Assistant Professor of Science in the Madras Christian College, who was an atheist, came to the Swami for discussion one day, and the atheist was converted into a truly religious man, and he thereon renounced the world and became a recluse. Madras saw the marvellous power of the Swami and acknowledged it, so much so, that when the Swami showed a desire to attend the Chicago Congress of Religions, a few went round and collected subscriptions. Messrs. P. Anandacharloo, Justice Subrahmania Aiyer, and others, among whom may be included the Rajah of Ramnad and the Maharajah of Khetri, helped very much in the collection of subscriptions. The Swamiji started towards the end of 1892 and after visiting a few places in China and Japan, reached Vancouver in the coldest winter. From Japan he wrote a long article advising his countrymen to follow the example of Japan. He wrote: "I cannot write what I have in my mind about the Japs in one short letter. Only I want, that numbers of our young men should pay a visit to Japan every year. To the Japanese, India is still the dreamland of everything high and good. And you, what are you?—talking twaddle all your

lives, vain talkers, what are you? Come, see these people and then go and hide your faces in shame. A race of dotards, you lose your caste if you come out!! Sitting down these hundreds of years with an ever-increasing load of crystallised superstition on your heads, for hundreds of years spending all your energy upon discussing the touchableness of this food or that, with all humanity crushed out of you by the continuous social tyranny of ages, what are you? And what are you doing now?—promenading the sea-shores with books in your hands—repeating uudigested stray bits of European brain-work, and the whole soul bent upon getting a thirty rupees clerkship, or at best becoming a lawyer—the height of young India's ambition,—and every student with a whole brood of hungry children cackling at his heels and asking for bread! Is there not water enough in the sea to drown you, books, gowns, university diplomas, and all?

Come, be men! Kick out the priests who are always against progress. Because they would never mend; their hearts would never become big. They are the offsprings of centuries of superstition and tyranny. Root out priestcraft first. Come, be men! Come out of your narrow holes and have a look abroad.

See how nations are on the march ! Do you love man? Do you love your country ? Then come, let us struggle for higher and better things ; look not back, no, not even if you see the dearest and nearest cry. Look not back, but forward ! !

India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young men.—men, mind, and not brutes."

The Swami reached Vancouver ; thence he went to Chicago, through Canada. Seeing that he could get no information about the fair, he got very sorry ; all his bright ideas were gone ; his cheeks no longer retained their rosy colour ; he even felt sorry why he came to America. A hundred times he was disappointed and he wanted, if possible, to go back. But the trumpet call of duty to his motherland, duty to the blessed hands that encouraged him in his search after truth in his early days, more than all, duty to himself, forced him to take a resolute vow even against tremendous odds. He went to a village near Boston, and there lived with an old lady. She had met him accidentally in a railway train and invited him. She kept him as a curio for showing to her friends and visitors. Starvation, cold, hooting through the streets for his queer

dress, these were what he had to fight through. In this foreign land, he was quite alone and unaided ; and to his sore disappointment, he learnt that the Parliament was not to open for many months to come. But his host, the lady who learnt from his own mouth his mission, introduced him to Dr. Borrows, the President of the Fair.

At last the Parliament began its sittings on the 10th September 1893. The Swami did not know how to get a hearing in the hall. He had to contend against great theologians and professors of divinity who drew fat salaries and who were not for giving a short shift to a nameless man who had the temerity to ask for permission to assist at their learned and solemn deliberations.

But, the courtesy of Dr. Borrows smoothened all difficulties in the way of our young Sanyasin of 31 and the humble representative of the RELIGIONS of India was allowed to make a speech to the learned assembly. Missionaries of every Church, Mahammadans, Agnostics, Theists, Brahmos, Buddhists and the Theosophists were all present and represented. I cannot give expression to the Swami's thoughts at that time. Only let me quote his own words.

"There was a grand procession, and we were all marshalled on to the platform. Imagine a hall below and a huge gallery above, packed with six or seven thousand men and women representing the best culture of the country, and on the platform learned men of all the nations of the earth. And I, who never spoke in public in my life, to address this august assemblage ! ! It was opened in great form with music and ceremony and speeches ; then the delegates were introduced one by one, and they stepped up and spoke. Of course my heart was fluttering and my tongue nearly dried up ; I was so nervous, and could not venture to speak in the morning. Mazumdar made a nice speech,—Chakravarti a nicer one, and they were much applauded. They were all prepared and came with ready-made speeches. I was a fool and had none, but bowed down to Devi Saraswati, (the tutelary Deity of this hall), and stepped up, and Dr. Borrows introduced me. I made a short speech. I addressed the assembly as "Sisters and Brothers of America,"—a deafening applause of two minutes followed, and then I proceeded, and when it was finished, I sat down, almost exhausted with emotion."

The young Swami scarcely thought that he would carry the palm the next day; scarcely did he dream of success in an assembly of the world's greatest men; scarcely did he dream for a moment that he was the next day to be the star of the Western world. His voice rang with a golden note across the hall, where the most august personages were assembled, sending a thrill of joy and happiness to the minds of the thousands present. That day he made but a short speech; but it was in the most tolerant attitude and he quoted the blessed words of the Gita,

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ (iv-11.)

"Whosoever comes to me, through whatsoever form I reach him, all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me." The next day, the papers announced that Swami Vivekananda was to speak on Hinduism on 19—9—1893 and his speech was to be the hit of the day. Little did anybody believe that the Swami was soon to be the central star of the parliament. But he was endowed with a beautiful and captivating physiognomy and his musical voice, his great natural powers of fascinating and inspiring eloquence, a rare faculty of lucid exposition

and an intimate knowledge of the religions and philosophy upon which he had to address, over-powered the overcrowded hall and the gallery to suffocation. Just hear his concluding voice as it echoed with a silvery strain of music across the Chicago Hall: "May He who is the Brahman of the Hindus, the Ahura-Mazda of the Zoroastrians, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jehovah of the Jews, the Father in Heaven of the Christians, give strength to you to carry out your noble idea; the star arose in the east; it travelled steadily towards the west; sometimes it got dimmed and sometimes effulgent; but it has made a circuit round the world and now, it is again rising, on the very horizon of the east, the borders of the Sanpo, a thousandfold more effulgent than it ever was before.

"Hail! Columbia, Motherland of Liberty! It has been given to thee, who never dipped her hand in her neighbour's blood, who never found out that the shortest way of becoming rich was by robbing one's neighbours, it has been given to thee to march at the vanguard of civilisation with the flag of harmony."

This epoch-making address of the Swamiji on Hinduism was echoed with a storm of applause. The

New York Herald observed, "Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him, we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation."

"He is an orator by divine right, and his strong, intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and orange was hardly less interesting than those earnest words and the rich, rythmical utterance he gave them."

The President of the Scientific section of the Parliament of Religions wrote, "Vivekananda spoke both on the floor of the Parliament itself and in the meetings of the scientific section, over which I had the honour to preside, and on all occasions, he was received with greater euthusiasm, than any other Christian or pagan. The people thronged around him wherever he went and hung with eagerness on his every word. He has been often invited to preach in Christian pulpits and has been by all who have heard him applauded most cheerily."

"All this grand and unequalled feat was achieved by the gifted and favourite pupil of Sri Ramakrishna."

A few Parsis of the Bombay Presidency representing Zoroastrianism, Mr. V. R. Gandhi represent-

ing the Jain community, Manilal Nabhubai who had sent several papers, Professor Chakravarthi of Allahabad, Lakshmi Narayan of Lahore, Pratap Chandra Mazoomdar and Nagarkar of the Brahmo Samaj who were particularly welcomed by the Unitarians, were all present as delegates, but they were all nothing before the illustrious Bengali in his orange robe.

Another paper spoke of him as having awoke the most uproarious applause on the platform of the parliament.

"He was a great favourite at the parliament from the grandeour of his sentiments and his appearance as well. If he merely crossed the platform, he was applauded and this marked approval of thouands he accepted in a child-like spirit of gratification without a trace of conceipt. * * The four thousand people in the hall of Columbus would sit smiling and expectant waiting for an hour or two of other men's speeches to listen to Vivekananda for fifteen minutes. The chairman knew the old rule of keeping the best until the last."

A lecture bureau secured his services and he lectured all through the west. But soon he saw that several stood in real need of religion, pure and un-

defiled. He, therefore, at a great pecuniary loss, severed his connection with the bureau, and taught these truthseekers. In Des Moines, he spoke three times and the people gathered round him and found their time well-spent in discussing religious and metaphysical questions with him. "But," said the Jova State Register, "woe to the man who undertook to combat the monk on his own ground and that was where they all tried who tried it at all. His replies came like flashes of lightning and the venturesome questioner was sure to be impaled on the Indian's shining intellectual lance. The workings of his mind, so subtle and so brilliant, so well stored and so well trained, sometimes dazzled his hearers; but it was always a most interesting study."

Before the first year of his stay in America was over, he had two American disciples, Madam Louise who later on became Swami Abhayananda, and Mr. Sandsberg who became Swami Kripananda. He went on lecturing and teaching the really needy people. It was at this time that a mass meeting was held at Calcutta to "publicly record the greatest works of the Swamiji." Several men like Raja Peary Mohan Mukerjee, C. S. I., Hon'ble Justice Gurudas Banerjee,

Narendra Nath Sen, N. N. Ghose and Surendra Nath Banerjee wrote letters to our Swami, and several meetings were held, in which stirring speeches were delivered on the good work done by the Swamiji. Raja Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, Justice Subrahmania Aiyer, C. I. E., and others also had their own arrangements to record the Swami's work. Raja Ajit Singh Bahadur of Khetri, Bhaskara Sethupathi, the Rajah of Ramnad, etc., sent addresses to the Swami in token of his good work.

Mr. Lewis G. James of the Brooklyn Ethical Association wrote a letter to Babu Shashipada of Barangore at this time. "The sum of £10-5-4 herewith forwarded constitutes the proceeds of a lecture before our association by your noble countryman, the Swami Vivekananda, who has spoken for us several times before large audiences and created great interest for us in the Vedanta philosophy, and also in the social and political conditions in India. In justice to the Swami I should say that the proposition to give a benefit lecture for your school was his own voluntary idea with which we were delighted to co-operate." The amount was utilised for the Boarding school for Hindu widows.

Meanwhile, the Christian Missionaries, in whose way of money-making Swamiji stood, and the Theosophists, whose theory of "secret" wisdom Swamiji opposed, began to circulate scandal about our illustrious sanyasin. To quote the Swamiji's own words, "there is not one black lie imaginable that these did not invent against me. They blackened my character from city to city, and from door to door. Every man who became my friend was turned into an enemy." But the Swami in a challenge with certain materialists convinced them on their own ground that materialism without spirituality could not be a factor of civilisation and concluded that there is "He whom the Sun cannot express, nor the Moon, nor the stars; lightning cannot express Him, nor the Fire; through him they all shine."

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः । तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥ कठ उपनिषद्–V—15.

The effect of this lecture was instantaneous; earnest and sincere students came to him to study the principles of Yoga, and the foundation of the New York Vedanta Society was laid, where in class

lectures, Swamiji gave a clear and lucid expression of the most illustrative points of the Hindu Religion, Karmayoga and Rajayoga. His lecture on " MY MASTER ", Reason and Religion ", " Existence ", etc., are regarded to-day as revelations by many Americans, several of whom are very prominent men. Swamiji by his hard work, brought under his own personal influence, several wealthy and intellectual persons. He lectured twice a day, carried on a vast correspondence, gave interviews, private instructions, etc., and prepared literature for the guidance of his followers. Were it not for the enormous force of his magnanimous will-power, all this would have told very seriously upon his health. Another disciple, in the person of Dr. Street, (later on Swami Yogananda) enriched Swamiji's circle of followers. Besides, there were several lady disciples, among whose names comes the late Mrs. Ole Bull. A dozen such disciples accompanied the Swami to Thousand Island Park, where during seven weeks, he gave them daily instruction, and above all, the disciples had the advantage of sharing the swamiji's daily life, a life complete, beautiful, satisfying,—so sublime, yet so simple, full of higher thoughts and higher working, with his mind always attached to the lotus-like feet of his MASTER,

his IDEAL and LORD, whose legacy to the world he was—and of seeing the beauty and purity of his character.

"His principal characteristic is that he directs all his energy towards higher educational work. Being a graduate of the Calcutta University, he speaks almost as perfectly as if he were a native of London. If he does no more than to continue the development of that splendid spirit of charity which was displayed at the world's fair, his mission among us will certainly prove eminently successful."

From Chicago, Swamiji went to Harvard, Baltimore, Detroit, etc., earning on the way the friendship of the Rev. C.C. Everett, D.D., LL. D., of the Harvard University, and the latter wrote, "Vivekananda was sent by his friends and co-religionists to present their belief at the Congress of Religions that was held in connection with the world's fair in Chicago. This he did in a way to win general interest and admiration. Since then, he has lectured in different parts of the country. Everywhere he has made warm personal friends; and his expositions of Hindu philosophy have been listened to with delight. It is very pleasant to observe the eager interest with which his own people

in India follow his course and the joy they take in his success. I have seen a pamphlet filled with speeches made at a large and influential meeting in Calcutta which was called to express enthusiastic approval of the manner in which he has fulfllled his mission ; and satisfaction too at this invasion of the west by the oriental thought. This satisfaction is well grounded. But Vivekanada has created a high degree of interest in himself and his work. There is no department of study more attractive than the Hindu thought. Hegel said that Spinozaism is the necessary beginning of all philosophising. This can be said even more effectively of the Vedanta system. We owe a debt of gratitude to Vivekananda that he has taught us this lesson so effectively."

Thus Swamiji established in America the glory of his MASTER through his own success and reputation and showed his disinterested love for humanity by his wonderful work. Thereon, in 1896, Swamiji left for England, but found to his great surprise that the Englishman was not so impressionable as his American brother. Yet, patience and perseverence smoothened his life among the Englishmen and when he found out where the heartbeat of the nation was, he amazingly uttered: "I feel that John Bull is not really so

black as he is painted." Of his work in England, he writes, "That bold, brave and steady Englishman, if you put an idea into the brain, and screw it through the skull, it is there, and it never comes out and that immense practicality and energy of the race makes it sprout up and immediately bear fruit. That immense practicality, that immense vitality of the race, you do not see anywhere else. They are a nation of heroes, they are the true Kshatriyas; and their women, I have seen them work and do deeds which would stagger the bravest of Bengalis to follow. But with all this, behind all this superstructure, behind this covering of the fighter, there is a deep spring of feeling in the English heart, if you know how to reach it."

A series of lectures was arranged to be delivered in Piccadilly in the Royal Water-colour-painters' Institute, and one of them is the famous "Ideal of a Universal Religion". Class lectures were arranged for in London and the educated people began to flock to him. The attendence was uniformly good in each class and questions were freely asked and more freely answered. Mrs. Bidulph invited him to her house to deliver a lecture on "The Hindu Idea of Soul". Several well-known persons were present at this lec-

ture among whom many members of the Royal household could be recognised though incognito. Several clubs shared the benefit of the Swamiji's lectures, and each had its own share. The Rev. H. R. Haweis, the then leading authority on the Anglican Church, was so much pleased with the Swami's exposition of the Vedanta, and having listened to the marvellous gospel of love, toleration and sympathy that fell from the Swamiji's lips preached two sermons on a Sunday at St. James's chapel on our Swami and paid an eloquent and generous tribute to the illustrious monk of India.

Some time later, Swamiji made acquaintance with Professor Max Muller and visited him in his house at Oxford. The interview between the two is most solemn and I refer you to the Swami's lecture on Max Muller for a detailed study of it. Only let me quote a few words that passed between them in the course of a conversation.

Swamiji: " Ramakrishna is worshipped by thousands to-day, Professor."

Professor: " To whom else shall worship be accorded, if not to such ?"

* * * *

Swamiji: "When are you coming to India? Every heart there would welcome one who has done so much to place the thoughts of their ancestors in their true light."

The face of the aged sage brightened up—there was almost a tear in his eye, a gentle nodding of the head, and slowly the words came out—"I would not return then: you would have to cremate me there." Further questions seemed an unwarrantable intrusion into realms wherein are stored the holy secrets of man's heart.

Many became his disciples, notable among whom are Miss Margaret Noble, (later called Sister Nivedita), J. J. Goodwin, Captain Sevier, the joint founder of the Mayavathi Advaitha Ashrama, Miss Waldo, E. T. Sturdy, Miss Muller, and Mr. Eric Hammond.

At this time, the women of Cambridge, before whom Swamiji delivered a lecture on "Motherhood in India" sent the following letter to the Mother of Swamiji.

"Dear Madame—At this Christmas tide, when the gift of Mary's son to the world is celebrated and rejoiced over with us, it would seem the time of remembrance. We, who have your son in our midst,

send you greeting. His generous service to men, women and children in our midst was laid at your feet by him the other day, in an address he gave us on the Ideals of "Motherhood in India". The worship of his mother will be to all who heard him an inspiration and an uplift.

"Accept, dear madame, our grateful recognition of your life and work in and through your son. And may it be accepted by you as a slight token of remembrance to serve in its use as a tangible reminder that the world is coming to its true inheritance from God of brotherhood and unity."

The people felt the deepest regret when it was announced that he was to leave England; but they recognised the claims on the Swami of their brothers and sisters in India. The Swami went to Zurich, thence to Paul Deussen, the German Vedantist in Kiel, and on the 15th day of January 1897, landed at Colombo. Grand preparations were made for his reception from Colombo to Almora. Let me not dilate on these addresses and the Swamiji's replies thereto. You could all read them for yourself. Only the visit to Calcutta was most touching, as it was his place of birth. At Almora, a mutt for the training of

Brahmacharins has been built and I am glad to reveal to this audience that a boy of Kumbakonam is to-day an inmate of that Ashrama.

The starting of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission with centres at various places was the next work of the Swamiji—among which comes the Madras centre with His Holiness the late Swami Ramakrishnanda at its head.

Ill-health in 1899 made the Swami leave for England. From England he went to America (Chicago, New York, and California). Vedanta Societies and a Santi Asrama were founded; but the Swami was ready for the Paris Congress of Religions in 1900 where he spoke in French.

Then, he returned to India, but this time, a nervous wreck, caused on account of over-work. He needed rest; but he would not take it. He came to Benares and after bathing in the holy waters of the Ganges, was helping the poor of that part of India, when a Japanese gentleman, Mr. Okakura, came to invite him to Japan for a religious congress to be held there; Vivekananda enthusiastically started, but fell down for want of strength and the visit had to be postponed.

Just at this time, Swamiji saw that he had finished his work of delivering the MASTER's message; and he saw all the societies and mutts in excellent working order. He recognised that he could no more live in this mortal world without his Master, and on the fourth day of July 1902, he became extraordinarily meditative. The day was Ekadesi, and himself keeping the fast in all its strictness, he served his disciples. Some of them remarked, " Master, we should do these services for you, not you for us." Swamiji, with great calmness, answered " Jesus washed the feet of his disciples." But that was the last time. The disciples could not think of answering him, for they could not conceive of separation from him.

A Brahmacharin was attending on him in the afternoon, and at about 9 p. m., a sudden start, two long breaths, and then silence. The yogi had passed into Mahasamadhi.

The Brahmacharin and another sanyasin, seeing no sign of life, called in a doctor, who announced the sad news that he would no longer return. The body was preserved till 2 p. m. the next day.

In this manner did the glorious monk deliver his MASTER's message to the world.

So, we find that the Guru and the Motherland are the notes that join together to form the harmony, as it were, of Swamiji's works. These are the treasures which it is His to offer to the world in general and to India in particular. These furnish him with the strength and capability, which formed the necessary ingredients wherewith he compounded the world's heal-all of spiritual bounty. These are the lights burning within that single lamp, which mother India by his hand lighted and set up for the guidance of her own children and of the world, in the nine short years of work between September 19th 1893 and July 4th 1902. And to quote the memorable words of Sister Nivedita, some of us there are who for the sake of that lighting and of this record that he has left behind him, bless the land that bore him, and the hands of those that sent him forth, and believe that not even yet has it been given to us to understand the vastness and the significance of the message that he spoke.

And now the final benediction :

स्वस्ति प्रजाभ्यः परिपालयन्ताम्
न्याय्येन मार्गेण मही महीशाः ।

गोब्राह्मणेभ्यश्शुभमस्तु नित्यम्
  लोकास्समस्तास्सुखिनो भवन्तु ॥
  काले वर्षतु पर्जन्यः
    पृथ्वी सस्यशालिनी ।
  देशोऽयं क्षोभरहितो
    ब्राह्मणास्सन्तु निर्भयाः ॥

May He whom the Hindus call Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, etc., the Jews Jehovah, the Christians Christ, the Mahomedans Allah, the Zoroastrians Ahura-Mazda, ever give us Peace ! !

APPENDIX.

Speech made by M. R. Ry., C. Ramanujachariar, Avl., of Madras, on the occasion of the forty-eighth Birth-day Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, celebrated at Trichinopoly, on 13th February 1910.

About a quarter of a century ago, a wave of scepticism, and agnosticism began to deluge the world, and it looked as if religion was in danger of death and destruction. The mechanical view of the universe presented by Huxley and Tyndall, Darwin and Spencer, caught the minds of men. Intellect, sharpened by science, and led by the senses, began to search the whole world of experience for the soul of man. The living temple was dissected; God was put into the test tube; and the new High Priests, with the zeal worthy of a Kamsa, conclusively proved that belief in Divine life was a pure myth—the result of a feverish imagination, the work of a cunning priest-craft and the inspiration of superstition. The loss of

the soul was the malady of the day. The poetry, the chivalry and the romance of life could not stand before the whirl and rush, the bustle and turmoil, of modern life. Verily the modern man has gained the whole world and lost his own soul. But intellect alone cannot solve the problem of life. The best men in the west were not satisfied in this soulless mechanical and automatic view of life. They found out that gold fever and the thirst for power made men more men restless than ever. The passion for truth, the glorious heritage of modern science, seized their minds and possessed their souls. For a time they took refuge in art ; then they turned to poetry, morality and philosophy. But none of these could satisfy the irrepressible thirst of the soul.

While thus they were immersed in this dark and overwhelming despair, a glorious vision dawned on them, the horizon was touched by the golden rays of the rising sun, and shining ethereal forms emerged out of the golden orb. They wept for very joy and were filled with rapture. These shining forms were the wise men of the East, the blessed sages of India, ever ready to help those that thirst for God.

Meanwhile, what was the state of India ? Subject

to centuries of slavery, her children had forgotton their glorious heritage and were now sunk in the lowest depths of formalism and superstition. Satvic peace had degenerated into tamasic dulness ; and ceremonials had taken the place of spiritual earnestness. Commercialism, the spirit of the age, had invaded every sacred tie of Hindu life and undermined the religious basis of our civilisation. The orthodox clung to the dry bones of religion with the zeal of fanatics. They saw no meaning in the absurd superstition of the country and yet, they must perform the ceremonies, being in society. The Brahmana, once the pride of India, was hurling down headlong into materialism with all the keen intelligence of his race. Caste based upon spiritual qualification had degenerated into a social tyranny most appalling to behold. At best the educated man had only intellectual conviction about religion, which scarcely filtered down to the heart, through which alone religion could be realised. We are so much accustomed to the denunciation of our present degraded condition that I do not want to add one more probe into the wound.

The historical view is often misleading. In our broad generalisation of the conditions of modern India,

we are apt to take a very pessimistic view of life and consider that India has hopelessly degenerated without any redeeming feature. India is now as young and beautiful as ever. Her capacity for producing sages is infiinite and those who have eyes to see may still meet sages in every part of this Punya Bhumi. Critics, patriots and philanthropists think that India needs to be revised by them and forget that ours is a sage-made civilisation as old as the creation.

But this does not contradict the general view that there are ups and downs in the history of nations as of individuals. At any rate, there is no doubt of the present degenerate condition of the educated Hindus. Fascinated by the glamour of western civilisation they are ashamed of their motherland and eagerly ape the vices of the west; while the west with its passion for truth is proceeding at an electric rate towards the goal of humanity. We are yet standing in idolatrous admiration of Huxley and Spencer imitating all the vices of a godless azuric civilisation and are hastening towards corruption and death. A few men, however, were not satisfied with this mad craving of the senses and tried to rekindle the fire once more. Many samajams like the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo

Samaj and reform movements were started, but time proved that these did not touch the real chords of our civilisation. The earnest seekers after truth were again immersed in gloom and despair. Once again in the history of spiritual civilisation, the prayer went forth from Mother Earth for the destruction of modern civilisation and the preservation of Dharma.

While the east and the west were thus pining for a Redeemer, there appeared in the little village of Kamarpukur in Bengal a young man with a strange unearthly appearance consumed by divine love and wisdom. The story of this man is now the common property of all. But we may read it a thousand times and yet the charms of this beautiful life possess us more and more. We who had not the privilege to sit at his feet have only to look at the picture. Ah! how telling is the childlike simplicity of the face! His eyes are really turned inward and bear eloquent testimony to the soul lost in God-consciousness. Who could describe the limitless ocean of SAT-CHIT-ANANDA in which he was for ever and ever immersed, and from which he had so often to be brought back to his senses? Was his mind a waveless ocean bathed in light and effulgence, a veritable क्षीराब्धि for the abode

of God? Was it all light—light effulgent that lights the Sun, Moon and the stars? Was it filled with ever-expanding love and bliss and grace?

His coming indicates a high watermark in the tide of civilisation. The whole universe is filled with joy and rapture at the birth of a great saviour. When a man becomes a sage, he raises the whole world along with him, for all life is essentially one and the same. Truly does Swami Vivekananda say:—

"Even the Buddhas and the Christs are but second-rate men; the greatest men of the world have passed away unknown. The highest men are calm, silent and unknown. They are sure that, even if they go into a cave and close up the door, simply think five thoughts and pass away, these five thoughts will live through eternity. They will penetrate through mountains and cross oceans and travel through the world, and will enter into some brain and raise up some man who will give expression to these five thoughts."

Thus this great sage, a God among men, spread a charm wherever he was. Many sat spell-bound to hear him. And to-day he is worshipped as an avatara

in the whole world. Such is the silent power of godliness.

The modern power of commercialism by her facilities of communication has annihilated distance and brought all the nations of the world on the common platform of strife and competition. The complexities of modern life were never dreamt of in the past. Clashing interests and conflicting ideals have been irresistibly brought together. Can we not say that India with its diversified races, creeds, interests and ideals will be the battle-ground of the world? Nowhere else in the world can there be so much diversity—diversity in caste, creed, colour, nationality of interests, ideals, &c. India is really a microcosm, a miniature universe. The solution of her problem is the solution of the problem of the world. Whether we like it or not, we are no longer to remain in isolation. We are confronted by conflicts everywhere. We have to tolerate them whether we will or no. Toleration leads to assimilation and unification. Thus unity in diversity—the plan of creation, as Swami Vivekananda said—is to be realised only in India. It is her precious privilege, her innate right. But though the principle is not new to us, we find the application to be difficult. The contradictions of

modern life are so amazing that we often despair of finding a mean between the possible and the impossible. But it was reserved to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa to reconcile the irreconcilables and make a universal application of the principle. In him met all clashing interests and conflicting ideals and found their reconciliation. He was the fulfilment of every creed, religion and philosophy, orthodoxy and heterodoxy, the Brahman and the Pariah, the Indian and the westerner, he was all this and more. A better Christian or Buddhist could not be imagined. The name of Rama melted his mind as much as that of Allah or Jehovah. Even the conflicting màrgás claim him as their own. His was the the privilege, we may say, unique, in the history of religious aspirations, of sucking the honey from every flower of religion and philosophy. He thus summed up in the short span of his earthly sojourn the history of the whole human race in all its varieties and perfected it by the realisation of God-consciousness.

"The sage sits in a cave and thinks five thoughts. These penetrate through mountains and cross oceans and travel through the world." Yes. Who can be a better example for this statement than Swami Vive-

kananda himself? Swami Vivekananda was early marked for his mission. With a towering intellect and an inspiring personality, this apostle of universal religion actually did cross oceans and travel throughout the world carrying with him the torchlight of truth—the message of his MASTER. He has done more for India and the world than any one man during the last decade. To-day his ideals are the ideals of thousands of educated men all over the world. We are met here to-day to do homage to this mighty sage and his world-moving disciple. By doing so, we really pay homage to all that is noblest and best in the traditions of our religion.

The prophetic eye of the Swami seized the fact that India had a mission in the world, viz., of spiritualising modern civilisation. He knew well that religious revival precedes and sanctifies all other reforms, social, political and material. The weary world is now being brought back to the fountain again; western civilisation has already reached a deadlock and looks to India for inspiration once more. All glory to Sri Swami Vivekananda, as he was the first to hearken to this call. To regenerate the world, India has to be regenerated. Swami Vivekananda

and his co-disciples have themselves set the example.

The Young band of Sanyasins, gathered together by the Swami, inspired by their Master's life and burning with a religious patriotism, formed themselves into a mission for the guidance of the struggling humanity. The apostles of Jesus and the disciples of Buddha were not more triumphant in their mission. The sublimity of their ideal and the purity of their lives draw forth the admiration of all.

His Holiness SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA, with a living love for God and his Guru—all his own—has been in our midst for more than ten years. His saintly character and silent work are familiar to you all. Hundreds of educated men have sat at his feet and drunk deep of the fount of wisdom and love. I and many young men like myself, immersed in materialism and growling in darkness, have derived consolation by coming under his paternal care. The many branches in Southern India and the more silent but lasting influence he has effected in the minds of men bear ample testimony to his work. But Ramakrishnananda the man, the saint, is greater than Ramakrishnananda the preacher. You have only to watch his life for a week and a new flood of light, such as we rarely

experience in these days, is sure to course through your veins, and life will verily assume a deeper meaning. Madras is thus peculiarly fortunate in having amidst it this dispenser of devotion and of love.

The branch at Trichinopoly, which is to be ushered into existence shortly, coming under the holy influence of such a great personality, is destined, I am sure, to carry the torchlight of true religion to every nook and corner of the district, and to bring peace and solace to the struggling souls tossed hither and thither by numerous influences at work. There can be no place more fitted for the manifestation of the activities of the mission than Trichinopoly, with its numerous institutions for the training of youths, with its votaries of other religionists ready to draw away young minds from the faith of their birth, and above all, with the Holiest of Holy Shrines in India, ever reminding man of the temple within himself. May Sri Ranganatha, the ever-merciful and the ever-gracious Lord, vouch unto us strength and devotion to carry out the noble work.